

TIME
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NEWSPAPERS

Spies Every Sunday

Kim Philby may not have done Britain—or the U.S.—much good in the 34 years he served as a Soviet spy, but he certainly has been a big help to London's Sunday newspapers. For five straight weeks the Sunday Times and the Observer have battled to see which could produce the most titillating details about the master spy. What did Philby like to drink? (Raki, a Turkish liqueur.) What were his favorite jokes? (Dirty.) Why did he stammer? (Suppressed violence.) That and much more came out in the kind of competition the so-called "quality" press has seldom indulged in.

The competition began prematurely. The Observer's Middle East Correspondent Patrick Seale, who replaced Philby when he defected to Russia in 1963, had been working on the story for four years with the help of Philby's ex-wife Eleanor. Publication was still months away when the Observer learned that Roy Thomson's revitalized Sunday Times had dispatched a ten-man team to get the story. To beat the Times to the punch, the Observer slipped in its first Philby installment on Oct. 1. As soon as they caught sight of the edition, the Times editors reprinted and ran their first Philby story. It was a report from Philby's son John, a struggling London art student, who had been sent to Moscow by the Times to interview dad. Said father to son: "I have come home."

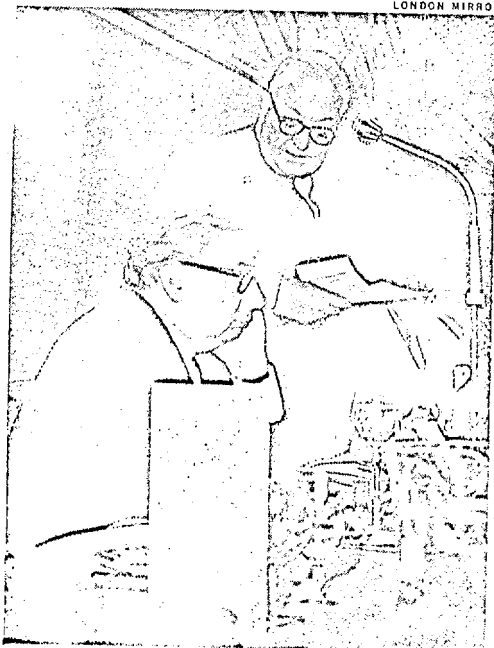
Every Girl Wants One. The next Sunday, both papers offered a second round of revelations. The Times provided a highly detailed, perceptively written account of how Philby got started

in espionage. The Observer ran some sentimental recollections of Eleanor's—just the thing to make every girl wish she had a spy for a husband. "If your work demands the most tireless watchfulness, you tend to compensate by the intensity of your sex-based relationships," wrote Eleanor. "Our marriage was perfect in every way." In a separate article entitled, "The Spy We Took In from the Cold," the Observer explained why it had hired Philby after he had been dismissed from intelligence: he had been warmly recommended by the Foreign Office.

On Sunday No. 3, the Times scored with more revelations about the laxness of British security, while the Observer ran a reminiscence on Philby by a pseudonymous CIA operative who once worked with him in Washington. The following week, the Observer broke through with Eleanor's description of her last, baffling days in Beirut with Philby. He was disconsolate, she reported, over the death of his pet fox Jackie. The Times published the first pictures of Philby with his new Moscow wife, Melinda—a girl who likes spies apparently, since her former husband was Philby's colleague-in-espionage, Donald Maclean.

Very Good Picture. All very embarrassing to the government. At a dinner given by Lord Thomson for visiting U.S. businessmen last week, Foreign Secretary George Brown, who admits to getting a bit tipsy at parties, departed from his prepared speech and lit into Thomson. "It is about time you shut up. Some of us think it is about time we stopped giving the Russians half a start on what we are doing, and, my dear Roy, I ask you and the Sunday Times to take this into account and for God's sake, stop." Replied Thomson: "We don't always take George very seriously, and now you have a very good picture of the man who is Foreign Secretary of this great country."

Brown's latest indiscretion sparked more outcries for his resignation, but he could at least take comfort in the fact that the Sunday Times was, more or less, stopping. Last Sunday it scarcely mentioned Philby, instead it published the memoirs of that uncontroversial and undeniably loyal Englishman, Sir Francis Chichester.



BROWN & THOMSON AT BANQUET
Sombody ought to shut up.

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